

20001-8-025

Wanganui Home Birth Report May 1989

Exciting events have taken place in Wanganui. Consumers are now wanting the home birth option to be readily available in this area. For that reason a Home Birth Association was 'birthed' in May 1988 by a small number of very committed and enthusiastic people.

To date 7 families are actively involved. Meetings are held on a monthly basis with a \$10.00 membership fee.

So far home births have occurred at the rate of one every two months and that has been without any publicity.

There is one English trained G.P. who has been involved in these home births and seems to be inundated with requests. The Association is continuing to approach other G.P.s.

They are also looking for a midwife(s). One midwife seems slightly interested and is being coached along with information, opportunities to attend births and view videos.

Three domiciliary midwives from Palmerston North have attended four home births in Wanganui so far. It is a time consuming and demanding commitment for them and they would appreciate it if a dom. midwife would soon take up practice in Wanganui.

The Area Health Board has been quite approachable. So far we have negotiated free access to equipment and a verbal agreement has been reached where the hospital district midwife can cover for some of the post natal visits, if the dom. midwife and mother involved agree. (That is if for some reason we can't come over from Palmerston North).

I attended a recent meeting with the Manager of clinical services of the Wanganui Base Hospital, who was quite favourable towards the home birth option. In fact he had received a letter from one of the local obstetricians who is prepared to establish 'low risk factors' with a working party and advocates a good team approach towards home birth. The community health section of the hospital seems also prepared to help fund a survey to establish whether there is really a community need for a home birth service. Quite promising.

Meanwhile the hard work is going on and being kept up by this committed Wanganui Bunch.

Ruth Martis

Pahiatua Home Birth Report May 1989

Pahiatua has a small maternity unit and to this date the battle goes on to keep the unit open. An ideal place for the home birth scene. (Pahiatua is situated ca. 40 km from Palmerston North and ca. 90 km from Masterton). There is a lot of confusion as to which area it belongs to i.e. Wairapa or Manawatu. Two G.P.s have a practice there and one had agreed to attend a home birth. So great news Pahiatua had its first home birth on April 9th. Prior to that it was negotiated with the hospital that they provide access to equipment and in case the G.P. was not available to use their facilities but the home birth team would carry on as though they were at home. In fact, the hospital midwives were quite excited about the home birth and wanted to discuss 'everything' after the birth over a cup of coffee. It would be great to see home birth option extend to this area too, although it is quite a distance for dom. midwives to travel.

Ruth Martis